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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this booklet is to provide administrators, teachers, and students in Alberta, Canada, with samples of students' writing that exemplify the criteria used to score students' written responses on the June 1991 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. The Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of two parts: Part A: Multiple Choice and Part B: Written Response. This booklet deals with the writing assignment, which required students to respond to an issue question. Each sample paper in this booklet has been reproduced as it appeared to the markers, that is, in the student's own handwriting. Accompanying each response is a discussion relating the characteristics of the response to the descriptors in the scoring guide. The scoring guide is reproduced in an appendix. (DB)

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Samples of Students' Writing

from the

Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test

June 1991

Alberta Education
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INTRODUCTION

Purpose

The purpose of this booklet is to provide administrators, teachers, and students with samples of students' writing that exemplify the criteria used to score students' written responses on the June 1991 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test. Examples of the full range of students' writing are provided.

Content

The Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test consisted of two parts: *Part A: Multiple Choice* and *Part B: Written Response*. This booklet deals with the writing assignment, which required students to respond to an issue question. Each sample paper in this booklet has been reproduced as it appeared to the markers, that is, in the student's own handwriting. Accompanying each student's response is a discussion relating the characteristics of the response to the descriptors in the scoring guide. The scoring guide is reproduced in the Appendix, page 31.

Selection of Papers

The papers selected for this booklet were used as samples for training markers during the July 1991 marking session. As such, these papers generally illustrate the quality of students' work at each of the five levels of accomplishment described in the scoring guide. The additional papers and excerpts of student writing were selected as examples for use in classroom instruction.

Confirming Standards

The initial work of confirming the standards that would govern the scoring of the June 1991 writing assignment was undertaken by a group of experienced Grade 9 Social Studies teachers during the week of June 24, 1991. Their task was to read a large enough sample of papers to find exemplars of the upper and lower ranges of the marking criteria.

These teachers also suggested adjustments to the scoring guide where needed to facilitate the marking of the assignment. They selected papers that were illustrative of the various scoring descriptors. The second step in confirming standards involved a day-long session for teachers who were specially selected to serve as leaders of small groups of markers. These teachers reviewed the sample papers selected during the process of confirming standards and endorsed them as appropriate examples of the various scores possible, thus setting the marking criteria so that they were consistent with expectations for writing in Grade 9 Social Studies.

Marking Process

Teachers were selected for marking on the recommendations of their superintendents. All the markers were teaching Grade 9 Social Studies in the same school year that the test was administered and had done so for at least two years. The markers spent the first hours of the marking period in an intensive training session, which included a review of the scoring descriptors as they related to the representative papers previously selected by those teachers confirming standards and endorsed by the group leaders. These papers are discussed in the pages that follow.

Neither the name of the student nor the name of the school appeared on the test papers. Markers were advised not to mark a paper if they suspected that they recognized its source. They were instructed to disregard the quality of handwriting when evaluating the papers and to return a paper unmarked if they thought the handwriting would influence their judgment. When the writer had not completed the final draft, markers referred to the planning and drafting pages to add to their understanding of the writer's intent. No marks were placed on the students' written work during the marking process. Papers were read by one marker, although a random sample of papers was read a second time to establish inter-marker reliability. The range of quality of students' writing was scored as follows: 5-EXCELLENT, 4-GOOD, 3-ACCEPTABLE, 2-LIMITED, and 1-POOR. Each paper was assessed on this five-point scale for specific qualities within two reporting categories: SUPPORT OF POSITION and EXPRESSION. The mark for SUPPORT OF POSITION was then multiplied by two, doubling its weight in relation to the EXPRESSION category.

Periodically throughout the marking session, a "Reliability Review" process was performed. All markers were required to read and score an example paper that had previously been scored by those teachers who had assisted in the confirming standards process. In small groups, markers then discussed and commented on the scores they had assigned. Scores were then compared with and discussed in relation to the standards relevant to expectations and to the previously assigned mark. This process was repeated every morning and afternoon, thereby further ensuring marker reliability.

Cautions

The following cautions should be kept in mind when reading this booklet or when using the contents for instructional planning:

1. These sample papers reflect an interpretation of the curriculum by which teachers established and implemented standards specifically for the July 1991 marking session. The interpretation of the standards and the judgments made by the markers at the time may vary with other writing assignments and with writing completed under different circumstances. Therefore, these samples should be considered in that context when used as instructional models of writing. They are intended to help teachers and students identify strengths and weaknesses in classroom writing and in this way improve students' writing overall.

2. Readers should consider each student's accomplishments in light of the constraints of test writing. Under test-writing conditions, students produce writing that must be considered as first-draft only. When students write under conditions that permit discussion, review, and reflection, they may produce work that differs substantially from what is illustrated here.

GENERAL COMMENTARY

When the entire range of papers produced on the June 1991 Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test is viewed, several observations may be made about how Grade 9 students managed the assigned writing task. These papers are a source of information about approaches students take when responding to an issue. The following discussion is offered to teachers concerned with the outcomes of this test.

Most students used fairly well-organized arguments to respond to the issue, although some tended to use emotional language. Relevant facts and examples that reflected personal life experiences and encounters with the media and with other subject areas were used by writers. Markers were pleased to note very few blank papers: almost all students felt able at least to attempt writing on this issue. However, students appeared to have some difficulty focusing on the specific issue. Many responded more to "Should the Government of Alberta be involved in recycling programs?" rather than to the actual question, "How should the Government of Alberta be involved in recycling programs?" The students who misinterpreted the question were able to express concerns but did not outline any specific plan. Some students addressed a much broader range of environmental concerns than the recycling question called for. Given this sort of response, most students at this grade level would benefit from more practice at focusing on specific issues and at limiting their responses to the parameters of the topic. Generally, students appeared to hesitate about incorporating economic factors from the course into their writing; however, those who did tended to do so accurately. A few students experienced difficulty differentiating among the levels of government as well as among the economic responsibilities of government, business, and citizens.

Markers noted that a rather limited number of students incorporated data from the given "Information to Consider" in a meaningful manner. To build students' skills at including such information into their discussion and writing assignments, teachers can help students by exposing them to a variety of information that complements the issue being addressed. In some cases it appeared students felt that all data, even when contradictory, could be used to support their position. Other students used data that both supported and contradicted their positions without discriminating between the two. By presenting data supporting different sides of an issue, teachers can help develop student's differentiation skills.

Teacher comments indicate that more writing is being done in social studies classrooms. This was reflected in the test situation: students appeared to be consistently aware of audience, regardless of which format they chose. Students' selection of vocabulary was generally satisfactory, and words and expressions were usually used accurately. However, markers noticed the use of environmental buzz words and jargon. Some overly dramatic language was evident in remarks such as "killing our whole planet" and "garbage dumps in everyone's yards". Control over conventions (mechanics and grammatical construction) was evident in most papers, although some basic errors were noted.

On the Grade 9 Social Studies Achievement Test, students achieving the *acceptable standard* were expected to demonstrate an understanding of concepts and generalizations based on the knowledge and skills fundamental to the program. Despite this expectation, many students experienced difficulty using and applying information on the written assignment. Students who were able to draw relationships among concepts and who demonstrated little difficulty with higher process skills such as analysing, synthesizing, and evaluating achieved the *standard of excellence*. These students proficiently conveyed information and were able to use persuasive arguments in their written communication.

In testing situations, such as this one, students must draw on their knowledge and experience in order to respond to the assigned tasks. The range and extent of students' experiences are evident in their varied responses to this writing assignment. Teachers can help students respond to issues competently by building a sound social studies background and by addressing a variety of situations and issues. These can be drawn from text sources, current media, immediate community, and other appropriate subject areas. Teachers can also help students to relate their own experiences, interests, and observations to issues being examined and to focus their writing.

THE WRITING ASSIGNMENT

GRADE 9 ACHIEVEMENT TEST

SOCIAL STUDIES

JUNE 1991

PART B: WRITTEN RESPONSE

INSTRUCTIONS

- Part B consists of one written-response question worth 30% of the total mark.
- In this section of the test, you have a chance to demonstrate your ability to apply what you have learned this year to new situations and issues. The issue may be new to you, but your knowledge of social studies will help you prepare your response.
- Read all parts of the assignment carefully.
- Plan your time so that you can complete your response.
- Blank pages are provided for planning and drafting. Write your finished work on the lined pages.
- Use blue or black ink for your finished work.

FOCUS

You have lived and will live much of your life in an age when "recycling" is an everyday word.

Recycling is no longer strictly an environmental issue; it is an economic concern as well.

Recycling has become everybody's business.

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INFORMATION TO CONSIDER

City	Tonnes of waste/year	Population
Edmonton	505 000	583 872
Calgary	676 252	671 138
Medicine Hat	36 726	42 290
Lethbridge	54 480	60 614
Grande Prairie	27 739	27 208
Fort McMurray	32 917	33 698
Red Deer	71 000	55 947

Figures include residential and industrial-commercial garbage. Typically, residential waste is about 35% to 40% of the total. (Statistics obtained from municipalities)

– from *Environmental Views*
September 1985

- Garbage collection and sewage treatment have always been a government responsibility. These are low-profit but essential services.

- Research and development specialists are constantly inventing new uses for recycled products. Potential for large profits leads private industry to invest time and money in this area.

- The average bag of municipal trash is made up of:

Contents	Percentage
Paper	42
Food waste	28
Glass	6
Ferrous metal	6
Plastics	5
Miscellaneous	7

- Each dwelling unit (house, apartment) produces an average of 1066 kilograms of waste a year.

- No individual or community is happy with the idea of having an open dump near them. Although recycling costs a great deal of money, without recycling programs these dumps fill up fast and must be expanded often.

- Smaller communities are at a disadvantage in transporting recyclables to market. This greatly reduces the profit margin in recycling ventures.

- Prices for products are not always set by the laws of supply and demand. Government subsidies have existed for transportation and production of goods such as grain, oil, and natural gas, so why not have subsidies for recycling?

- Recycling efforts to date have seen only a 1% to 2% increase from the days of simple bottle depots and boy scout/girl guide collections.

– adapted from *Environmental Views*
September 1985

SITUATION

Your social studies class has been discussing issues related to recycling.

You have decided to express your concerns on recycling.

ASSIGNMENT

Recycling is a growing concern in Alberta.

HOW SHOULD THE GOVERNMENT OF ALBERTA BE INVOLVED IN RECYCLING PROGRAMS?

In presenting your opinion, consider economic and environmental factors.

Your written response may take the form of a letter to the government, a speech to your class, a newspaper editorial, or a position paper.

To support your opinion, use examples and evidence from the Information to Consider on page 25, as well as from YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF ECONOMIC SYSTEMS.

MARK ALLOCATION

- Support of Position **(20 marks)**
  Support a position on this issue by using an organized and convincing argument and relevant examples.

- Expression **(10 marks)**
  Communicate effectively by using appropriate vocabulary and correct conventions of language.

SAMPLES OF STUDENTS' WRITING

Student Sample A

In this paper, carefully chosen examples and logical reasoning support the writer's position with insight and maturity. This paper is representative of a 5-EXCELLENT.

FOR FINISHED WORK

"How Should the Government of Alberta be Involved in Recycling Programs"

It is my opinion that the Government of Alberta should become more involved in recycling programs. As recycling is everybodies business, the government should enforce penalties to deter members of the population from putting recyclable material in land-fills. The following paragraphs will discuss everything from what should be recycled to why we should get the government to help finance more ~~recycling~~ recycling programs.

According to the chart and information given by Environmental Views, September 1985", we can learn that 87% of the garbage in every bag of municipal trash is recyclable, yet "Recycling efforts to date have seen only a 1% to 2% increase from days of simple bottle depots and boy Scout/girl guide collections" (Environmental Views, Sept 1985). That information is a reason in itself why our government should get more involved in recycling. The government should go help start private recycling companies and subsidize them.

SUPPORT OF POSITION

This paper establishes a clear position that the provincial government should be more involved in recycling programs. The information used to support the position is carefully chosen. The main premise is that not enough is being done when we are left to our own means, and the "1% to 2% increase from days" quote shows appropriate supportive use of the presented data. The paper outlines a series of ideas, establishing that the government's role should include regulating private homes' waste volume; providing subsidies for business start-up, research and development, and transportation of recycled materials; and educating the public–thereby effectively drawing relationships between these concepts. The writer presents an idea about garbage bag stickers based on an American program, thereby demonstrating an ability to utilize information not provided with the assignment.

The writer demonstrates an understanding of appropriate government intervention into private industries by suggesting that the government subsidize business start-ups and research and development until "large profits lead to private industry to invest time and money in this area." Further insight is shown when transportation difficulties are examined and a government solution is proposed. Finally, the writer asserts that both the public and the government are responsible, and this ties in nicely with the sentiment in the second sentence of the introductory paragraph that "recycling is everybodies business."

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FOR FINISHED WORK

The government should also use the same type of garbage collection system as they do in some of the States ~~which is by~~ by restricting the amount of garbage allowed to be dumped by individuals. The garbage output of the average person taking into consideration recycling and composting could be one garbage bag a week, this could be maintained by selling special stickers which should be placed on the bag or the sanitary servicemen won't pick it up. If a person runs out of the stickers then they must pay a high price for more, the money can then be used for recycling programs.

If the government would finance more "bottle depot" like businesses, then it would give people that extra little push to recycle more paper, glass, ferrous metals, plastics as well as to compost food wastes.

If more money could be put into Research and Development then private ~~investors~~ industry may invest in recycling. An Environmental Review, September 1985 states "Research and development specialists

Although logical reasoning is evident and this persuasive paper demonstrates insight throughout, errors in organization do exist. The opening paragraph is somewhat disjointed with its statement of the writer's position, followed by the limited introduction of one of the writer's ideas and then by an all-encompassing declaration of what will follow. However, these errors do not seriously flaw the argument or reduce the persuasiveness of the paper.

EXPRESSION

Errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar exist but are minimal. Choice of specific words such as "subsidies," "potential," and "finance" show evidence of careful selection, and an appropriate level of language is used for a positive effect. The writer even attempts to play with the language, referring to garbage collectors as "sanitary servicemen." Although there is a run-on sentence, sentence type and length is well varied.

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are constantly inventing new uses for recycled products. Potential for large profits led to private industry to invest time and money in this area." Government subsidies would also help convince private industry to invest in the area of recycling.

Since smaller communities have a harder time with the financial burden of transporting recycled material, the goverment subsidies on the transportation of recycled materials would aid them greatly.

There are many ways in which the goverment can get involved more in recycling and I have just covered a few, Government support is greatly needed but the public should also carry some of the responsibilities and should be more educated. With the help of our government, I think that we should all work together to keep Alberta green!

Student Sample B

This fairly persuasive paper supports the stated position in an organized manner and is representative of a 4-GOOD.

FOR FINISHED WORK

June 11, 1991

Dear Mr. Ralph Klein,

I have recently been informed that you are to make a decision as to how the government should be involved in recycling projects. This decision takes many factors such as economics and environmental issues into consideration. Recycling projects help our quality of life and I would ask you to consider helping our program.

Municipal trash is made up of many items, but at least 42% can be recycled. Paper and glass make up almost 50% altogether, and if we recycle, this will reduce our dump size considerably. This will create more available land and cut costs when there is an expansion of the dump necessary.

Natural resources are also being preserved by recycling projects. By recycling paper, dozens ~~are~~ of trees are being saved keeping our forests alive. This creates a more enjoyable environment and less pollutants in the air.

The need of transportation is a field where I feel that the government can actively contribute. Small towns and communities need these services and are being ~~deprived~~ deprived of the chance to help out because

SUPPORT OF POSITION

This paper is well organized, with the opening paragraphs giving a few well-chosen facts that exemplify the writer's belief that government should be involved in recycling programs. The writer then clearly establishes the position that the government should support a transportation program to enable small communities to recycle. Although there is only this one specific action cited, it effectively demonstrates the writer's position that the government must "actively contribute" to recycling programs in order to maintain and improve our quality of life.

The writer demonstrates an understanding of the relationship between economics and the implementation of government programs. With the suggestion that environmental benefits would outweigh the expense of a transportation program, or at least be "much more reasonable" than current investment, the writer alludes to a current, appropriate example from outside of the classroom (corporate bailouts by governments). The letter is directed to the appropriate government minister, and the writer maintains the tone of concerned citizen throughout.

Some confusion is exhibited in the final paragraph when the writer refers to a 1 to 2 percent increase in recycling efforts as a 1 to 2 percent increase in aid. Although this slightly weakens the writer's position, overall the paper is fairly persuasive. This writer might easily have pushed further by citing specifics about the "program" referred to in the first paragraph or by delineating additional roles the government might take.

FOR FINISHED WORK

of their size. If the government would provide some trucks for recycling pick-up, everything would be easier. I am aware that we are recently in a recession, but ~~growing~~ providing funds for environmental reasons are much more reasonable than spending money on almost bankrupt companies who take the money and leave the taxpayers to recouperate the money for them.

Though an increase of aide by ~~4~~ 1 to 2 percent is greatly appreciated, I still feel that with more effort and placing capital in the right place, together, everyone can help clean up the world. Please consider my point of view and I truely thank you for your time.

EXPRESSION

The writer uses "safe" vocabulary and conventions, and spelling and punctuation are essentially error-free. Errors are made in word choice and structures, such as "we are recently in a recession" and "recouperate." Overall the language is clear and understandable. A good variety is shown in the length and type of sentences.

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Student Sample C

This paper presents a position and offers support but is lacking in detailed development of the ideas. It is representative of a 3-ACCEPTABLE.

FOR FINISHED WORK

June 11/1991

To whom it may concern;

I am writing this letter to express my beliefs and concerns on recycling. I think we need more attention paid to doing something about it. It does cost money, quite a bit in fact, but in time it will be a beneficial outcome.

Calgary's population is 671 138 and they produce 676 252 tons of waste every year. Edmonton has a population of 583 872 producing 525 000 tons of waste yearly. The amount of the tons of waste's that other cities in Alberta contribute are nearly as high, or higher then the population That's a scary thought. Soon there could be more waste then people. Procrastination does not help, most people are waiting around for someone else to do something. And not much is getting done.

SUPPORT OF POSITION

The writer presents the identifiable position that "the government should put more effort, time and money" into recycling. In the second paragraph, relevant supportive facts are offered as evidence of the severity of the problem, although the writer's concern that "soon there could be more waste then people" shows limited understanding. While reference is made to the transportation problems of small communities, no specific solution is offered and although responsibility is implied, it is not spelled out. The writer spends possibly too much time reviewing the problem and identifying the urgent need for action before something "scary" happens.

EXPRESSION

This writer makes a few errors in punctuation, grammar, spelling, and word usage, such as "there" for "their" and "your" for "you're." However, these do not affect the reader's understanding of the paper. The tone is broken once when the writer says "but your re-using recycling bins while your expanding dumpsights." Vocabulary is generally unremarkable and the word "procrastination" shows the writer's willingness to take a risk. The writer seems to possess a basic sense of sentence structure that is generally controlled.

Resources could be recycled saving costs and time in many industries. Those that live in small communities don't have to many "recycable advantages" they can't always get transportation, to take there papers, cans etc. to areas. It does take longer to fill a recycling bin then a dumpsight. But your re-using recycling bins while your expanding dumpsights. I think the bins are much better choice.

People need to get more involved and I think the government should put more effort, time and money into recycling. Why waste the money on advertisments, technology and many other things that will "Change our world"? Because without considering the garbage problem right now; we may not have a world to change.

Sincerly yours;

Student Sample D

This writer's weak support of an unclear position results in writing representative of a 2-LIMITED.

FOR FINISHED WORK

Dear government,

Does recycling mean anything to you? Well it does to me. With all that plastic and stuff going into our ground it's going to kill our environment. I wish you would do more about helping our environment. I think you should make a special on T.V. to show how all that plastic and stuff are killing our environment. Ask the people out there it would be a good idea to recycle all their papers, bottles, cans, glass, plastic and what ever else that's killing our environment. Were I live there not to many people that recycle as a matter of fact I can't think of anyone recycling around here.

very concerned.

SUPPORT OF POSITION

The paper is poorly organized and cites the vague position that "I wish you would do more about helping our environment." The idea presented, "a special on T.V.," shows a limited understanding of the topic and is only weakly supported. The writer further suggests asking "the people out there" about recycling but does not develop this plan with any hint of what to do with their responses. The writer seems focused on not killing our environment with "plastics and stuff." The last sentence is a final attempt to support the position by stating that there is not enough recycling. The government is referred to as the singular "you," showing a limited understanding of the complexities of government.

EXPRESSION

The author makes several errors in word usage and numerous spelling errors. Sentence structure is generally controlled, and there are relatively few punctuation errors. Limited vocabulary is evidenced throughout the paper and is especially noticeable in the writer's use of "stuff" and the repetitious "kill(ing) our environment" phrase.

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Student Sample E

Inaccurate content and failure to support a barely discernible position make this paper representative of a 1 POOR.

FOR FINISHED WORK

Recycling is very important issue in canada because of all the population and ~~out~~ waste that is affecting our ozone, for instances cars are the main source of population because of their exhaust factories are the most dangers because of the population it gives off each day. Hair spair containers, popcans, popbottles should all be recycle because of all the waste and population that hurts are environment. If we Don't do nothing about it who will.
the people in our environment don't realize how much recycaling means to us why not help our environment to keep clean and healthy place to live.

SUPPORT OF POSITION

This paper lacks persuasive elements basic to what is expected. The position is stated in the last sentence as "why not help our environment" but is vague and unconvincing. Although some causes of pollution are given, these are very limited and inaccurate, such as "Factories are the most dangers because of the population it gives off each day." Support for the position is inadequately couched in the line "If we don't do nothing about it who will."

EXPRESSION

The language is very limited, with frequent errors in spelling, word usage, and grammar. The writer appears to have some sense of sentence structure but does not punctuate correctly. The misuse of "population" for "pollution" is jarring. Because of the numerous errors in this piece, clarity is severely reduced and communication is impeded.

ADDITIONAL SAMPLE PAPERS

AND

EXCERPTS

The papers in this booklet represent only a small sample of the writing that was produced by Grade 9 students for the July 1991 marking session. Markers found that although each student's paper was unique, certain commonalities could be observed in the way students approached the issue. Of course, students experienced varying degrees of success with their responses. These efforts need to be supported and encouraged, and they can also be seen as opportunities for instructing students within a meaningful context. The following examples are offered for such uses.

Sample Paper 1

The response that follows is an example of a paper that easily met the criteria for an EXCELLENT score. The writer's position is presented in an organized, logical manner and is supported by a thoughtful three-point plan. Although a limited number of Expression errors and weaknesses appear, they are not severe enough to downgrade the Expression score from a 5.

FOR FINISHED WORK

The Role of Government in
Albertan Recycling Programs

We live in a world of self-interest, in which the main goal of people is to focus on the easiest ways in which to fulfill desire, and also in which to fulfill responsibility. The unfortunate fact is, few residents of Alberta care what effect their role in recycling will be on the environment, since their time on earth is limited and they may never live to see the environment in "wrack and ruin." Because the majority of Alberta's population will not likely loyally and steadily recycle garbage which they could much more easily just throw away, it is essential, for the sake of future generations, that the government impose strict laws upon people in order to force recycling, and help out in other ways.

One form of government involvement which would bring about many positive results for Albertans would be the government's providing of subsidies to recycling programs. It has always been expensive to recycle certain

One of the outstanding features of this writing is the organization. The introductory paragraph establishes the writer's position that since few individuals are interested in recycling, the government must take the initiative and force involvement. Each of the next three paragraphs addresses one of the ways the writer would have the government involved: by providing subsidies and initiatives, by setting up and enforcing laws and an incentive program, and by funding research and development. The conclusion reiterates the writer's position and notes that although it may not happen immediately, the general populace will eventually appreciate this proposed government interference.

The writer's position, "that the government (should) impose strict laws upon people in order to force recycling," is based on the obvious belief that people respond best to external motivation. The writer reasons that since this is a "society propelled by self-interest," people will generally only recycle to avoid paying a fine or to take advantage of some other incentive. Certainly the writer adopts a rather cynical tone, but it is sustained and remains constant as the basis for the arguments throughout the paper.

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FOR FINISHED WORK

products, and this has hindered the development of recycling programs. People are not willing to invest their money in this type of program simply because the profits are low, if at all; people are controlled by their own self-interest. If the government were to provide subsidies to organizations willing to assist in the recycling of materials, as well as initiatives such as tax-breaks, one can bet that there would be more people who would be willing to set up recycling programs. The government must act now and provide funds for recycling if it truly cares about Alberta's future, regardless of whether or not they are a part of it.

The setting up and enforcement of laws is an important part of the government's role in helping the environment. Through recycling programs. Since people try to take the "easy way" out of things, many simply throw out materials which are recyclable. With laws and penalties established,

An interesting aspect of this paper is that the position is supported with minimal reliance on the Information to Consider page. Certainly, accurate use of data can strengthen most positions, but it is worth noting that persuasive argumentation can be accomplished without it. This writer relies on an observation of human nature and a profound belief that society <u>needs</u> government to impose external motivation.

The reference to the existence of a legislated "Tag-a-Bag" program in Edmonton is not accurate. In fact, Edmonton does not have this program; however, at the time of this test writing, a proposal was before Edmonton city council to consider such a law. Although the writer erred in this regard, the example was appropriate to defend the position that the government should establish "laws and penalties" to motivate people to recycle. It was also a timely use of information obviously gleaned from some media source.

The writer understands social studies concepts. Paragraph two explains that government subsidies and "initiatives such as tax-breaks" are needed to raise the profit potential of recycling enterprises in order to attract nongovernment investment. The fourth paragraph outlines the relationship between successful research and development, the creation of jobs, and increased provincial prosperity.

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FOR FINISHED WORK

which would act against persons who throw out recyclable materials, it is likely that many people will clutch their pocketbooks and, rather than pay a fine, take a few extra minutes to dump some material in a recycling bin. If incentives were also provided to people in hopes of encouraging recycling, in addition to penalties for not doing so, the group of self-interested people in Alberta (which includes practically everyone) would have twice the reason to recycle. A good example of a city which is helping the environment is the city of Edmonton, Alberta. By inforcing the "maximum of two bags of garbage, pay extra for more" law, people are forced to conserve and recycle more. True, it may be more expensive, but what is money worth if there is no world left to spend it in? The setting up of laws, such as the exemplary example of Edmonton's "TAG A BAG" law, is essential government aid in the forcing of recycling.

Recycling, forced by government, can

The writer's ability has progressed to a point where, although inconsistent, attempts are made to deliberately choose precise vocabulary. "Undeniably," "propelled," and"hindered" show accurate use of specific language, while "cheapest" and "setting up" indicate room for growth in this area. Some distracting word choices occur, such as the redundant "exemplary example" and the awkward "profits are low, if at all"; however, spelling errors, such as "inforcing," are minimal. A fairly good selection of sentence type is exhibited, although sentences tend to be long and complicated. The writer is generally able to control these sentences through correct use of punctuation, albeit some errors are exhibited. This writer produced a lengthy, complex paper in a test situation but made relatively few errors in Expression. Given an opportunity to produce a second draft, the writer almost certainly would address these concerns.

have, undeniably, extremely beneficial impacts on the economy of Alberta. By providing funds for research and development of products which can be made from recycled goods, many jobs can be provided for people. This area has the potential to take in a good deal of money for private industries, and, as a result, many people may invest in the research and development of new products composed of recycled materials. The better these private industries fare, the more jobs will be provided, and the more likely that a larger percentage of the population will have money to spend in Alberta's stores and in the area of recreation. As more money is pumped into the economy, it prospers. Alberta's economic prosperity will be greatly benefit from such a largely important service as recycling.

Government involvement in recycling is the only way in which we can hope to encourage recycling in a society propelled

by self-interest. As the economy prospers and new technology results from research, people in Alberta, as a province, will begin to understand that when governments play a large role in recycling and the protection of the environment, risking their reputations, they are, in fact, to be thanked, not abused, for in a word forcing citizens to be responsible and SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT.

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Sample Paper 2

Markers found that many students wrote papers that, while acceptable or even good, fell somewhat short of their potential. In this example, the writer has a good understanding of what the assignment is asking for and is able to present relevant points, but fails to develop them sufficiently. The writer also exhibits communication weaknesses.

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The government should get involved with recycling, by giving money to bottle deposits, and companys that use recycled materials. They should also help small towns transport their recycleables to the market.

This will helps out our environment by using less materials like metal and glass. Without recycling garbage bumps will over fill and have to be rexpanded constinetly.

Problems with recycling are that with government help we will probly have to pay more taxs. We will also have to take more time seperating the recyclables from the crap.

The writer gives a definite position, that "the government should get involved with recycling," and in the first paragraph cites a specific plan for that involvement. The writer then gives a reason for adopting the plan and a consequence of ignoring it. Two problems with recycling are anticipated in the third paragraph, and, ideas for facilitating the plan are presented. The final one-sentence paragraph attempts to restate the position.

The writer obviously understands the social studies concepts related to government involvement and realizes that greater intervention will result in increased taxation. The responsibilities the writer would assign to the government, to supply money and to help provide transportation programs, are appropriate government roles.

The paper's strengths need to be enhanced by developing the issues. How should the government "help small towns transport their recycleables"? Through what type of program or subsidization should "money (be given) to bottle deposits, and companys that use recycled materials"? How will "using less materials like metal and glass" help our environment?

Communication weaknesses also impede the clarity of this paper. Conspiring to distract the reader from the paper's content are serious spelling errors such as "rexpanded constinetly," the poor word choice of "crap," and the letter confusion in "bumps" for "dumps." Note that not all of the writer's Expression skills are deficient. Except for the fragment "And by using the blue box program," sentence structure is good and shows some variety. Paragraphing is generally sound: ideas are coherently organized.

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Ways we can do this are by taking cans and paper to a recycling center. And by using the blue box program.

So, the government should give us money for helping us recycle.

Students such as this writer need more practice in writing a variety of forms of position papers and in examining their strengths and weaknesses. Teacher guided production of multiple drafts is a good means of accomplishing the cultivation that these writers need to become more proficient in the argumentation process. Multiple drafts also provide opportunities for correction and refinement of Expression components.

Sample Excerpts

The writer in this excerpt attempts to support a position by personalizing the issue in suggesting the unappealing things that could happen if government does not back recycling efforts.

Would you like to be living right next to a garbage dump? Well think of it this way one of these days your city garbage dump is going to have to expand and maybe it will expand your way. And without really noticing one day it'll be down back yard. But most people think that the government should try encourage more

This garbage-dump-in-your-backyard scenario was seen repeatedly by markers. Students should be made aware that this type of position defence is susceptible to exaggeration, which weakens the support of position.

The three excerpts below exemplify that almost all students realized the need to strengthen their positions, ideas, or arguments by including supportive information. Many incorporated facts from the Information to Consider page but did not always do so effectively. Problems were experienced in several areas, such as selecting appropriate data, accurately analysing facts, effectively communicating findings, and recognizing contradictory information. Observe the different manner in which three students handled the same information.

Bottle pickers play an important role in our society but yet the statistics show that scouts and bottle depos have only raised the effort of recycling by 1-2%

This writer has erroneously interpreted the information. Using data inaccurately usually weakens a position more than using no data at all.

My final way to prove my position is that recycling efforts to date have been only a 1% to 2% increase from the days of simple bottle deposits and boy scouts and girl guide collection. Well I think that we should increase our depots so that we could get rid of all the bottles.

Here the information has simply been rewritten, almost verbatim. No elaboration is offered to help the reader understand how this proves the previously stated position supporting recycling. An assumption by the student that the facts speak for themselves is a common error.

Since the days of when scouts and girl guides collected bottles for recycling, there still has not been much increase in the amount of recycling going on. Though many talk about it very few do anything. I the government needs to get involved, and set an example for the citizens of Alberta

In this passage the writer has effectively restated the information and then added the summative, interpretive statement "though many talk about it, very few do anything."

Students strive to use sophisticated words and phrases in their writing, with varying degrees of success. They try to manipulate language to achieve ambitious goals. The following passages delineate a striking contrast in the success of two such attempts.

Nearly everthing we use today can be recyded and reused instead of turning into environment threatening waste-demons. Recycling solves the problems of open dumps. Do one wants to have an open dump nearby to stink up the area and lay waste to land which could be better used for housing, agriculture, and beautiful parks. Everyday research and development specialists arediscovering new uses for recycled waste, which should be taking the waste-demons away from the hell of pollution, and adding glistening, reuseable product angles to the heaven of an environmentally-safe future.

In this passage the writer's two points, that "recycling solves the problems of open dumps" and that "research and development specialists are discovering new uses for recycled wastes," are obscured by the unsuitably embellished language. The metaphor seems self-conscious and forced, and is so over-powering that the reader is left wondering what the two points were.

Recycling in Alberta is an effort by all as a small step towards the salvation of this fragile earth. Unfortunately, recycling is a very small step indeed. Recycling has only increased 1% to 2% since the good old days of bottle depots and boy scout (and girl guide) collections. Edmonton and Calgary combined produces over a million tonnes of garbage a year. 35% to 45% of the garbage is from residential areas. Each house produces an average of 1000 kilos of garbage. Obviously, the government of Alberta has to take stronger methods to rally Albertans to take longer strides towards recycling.

This writer also uses a metaphor, but it is sustained unobtrusively and the main point that "the government of Alberta has to take stronger methods" remains clear to the reader. At the end of the paragraph, a call for "longer strides" refers the reader back to two earlier references to the recycling effort as a "small step." This writer also employs a sense of the dramatic to show how serious the situation is, but this effort is controlled by being limited to "the salvation of this fragile earth."

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APPENDIX

GRADE 9 SOCIAL STUDIES ACHIEVEMENT TEST

PART B: WRITTEN RESPONSE

SCORING GUIDE, JUNE 1991

WRITTEN-RESPONSE SCORING GUIDE

1. Support of Position (20 marks)

When marking SUPPORT OF POSITION, the marker should consider how well the student fulfills the assignment by:

- supporting a position on the issue
- presenting a convincing argument
- using appropriate examples

Support of Position as is appropriate at the Grade 9 level.

DESCRIPTOR	SCORE	CRITERIA FOR SCORING
EXCELLENT	5	The writer's position, whether stated or implied, is based on logical reasoning and carefully chosen, supportive examples. The paper is very persuasive and demonstrates maturity and/or insight.
GOOD	4	The writer's position, whether stated or implied, is based on sound reasoning and relevant examples. The paper is organized, persuasive and clearly developed.
ACCEPTABLE	3	The writer's position, whether stated or implied, is based on relevant facts. The paper is generally logical and may be somewhat persuasive.
LIMITED	2	The writer's position, whether stated or implied, is unclear. The paper lacks organization. The examples cited are only remotely related to the position and may be contradictory, confused, and/or vague.
POOR	1	The writer does not present a definable position or may state a position but makes little or no attempt to support it. Content is inaccurate and/or inappropriate. The paper either lacks a sense of purpose or is completely unpersuasive. Such writing may be frustrating to read.
INS		This is a special category. It is not an indication of quality. It should be assigned to papers that are blank, totally illegible, or address a completely different topic.

2. Expression (10 marks)

When marking EXPRESSION, the marker should consider the extent to which the student effectively communicates his/her position by using appropriate vocabulary and correct conventions of language.

PROPORTION OF ERROR TO LENGTH AND COMPLEXITY OF RESPONSE SHOULD ALSO BE CONSIDERED.

Expression as is appropriate at the Grade 9 level.

DESCRIPTOR	SCORE	CRITERIA FOR SCORING
EXCELLENT	5	The language used in support of the position is accurate, effective, and deliberate. The writing is essentially free from errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
GOOD	4	The language used in support of the position is clear and understandable. The writing has few errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
ACCEPTABLE	3	The language used in support of the position is adequate. The errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar do not impede the communication.
LIMITED	2	The language used is restricted and displays frequent errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar. These errors often impede the communication.
POOR	1	The language used has numerous errors in spelling, punctuation, and grammar that are both noticeable and jarring. These errors severely impede communication.